

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 OMB-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 SCCT-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 IO-10 /086 W

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R 171414Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2177

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PFOR, SP, FR

SUBJ: BASQUE VIOLENCE SPILLS INTO FRANCE

REF : MADRID 3894

SUMMARY: RECENT BOMBINGS AND OTHER ACTIONS IN FRANCE REPORTEDLY CARRIED OUT BY SPANISH EXTREME RIGHTISTS HAVE PROVOKED FRENCH GOVT REACTION. GOS CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN STATE OF EXCEPTION IN BASQUE PROVINCES BUT IS CONSIDERING OTHER POLITICAL MEASURES DESIGNED TO DE-FUSE TROUBLED SITUATION WHICH HAS BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REPERCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. SPANISH PRESS REPORTS VARIOUS VIOLENT INCIDENTS PAST TWO WEEKS IN FRANCE RELATED TO BASQUE ISSUE: (A) MAY 27 SHOOTING IN BAYONNE REPORTEDLY INVOLVING A SPANISH POLICE-MAN, (B) BOMBINGS JUNE 5 AND 12 IN BIARRITZ CAUSING ONE FATALITY, (C) BOMBING JUNE 12 IN HASPARREN, (D) DISCOVERY OF BOMB IN BASQUE LANGUAGE BOOKSTORE IN BAYONNE, (E) ABANDONED CAR WITH SPANISH PLATES FULL OF EXPLOSIVES IN ST.JEAN DE LUZ, (F) SELF-IMMOLATION OF BASQUE YOUTH FROM AN EXTREME LEFTIST ORGANIZATION IN FRONT OF SPANISH

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CONSULATE IN PAU, AND (G) MANIFESTATIONS OF SOME 6,000

PERSONS FROM FRENCH AND SPANISH LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS IN PARIS ON JUNE 11 IN SOLIDARITY WITH SPANISH BASQUE CAUSE.

2. THESE BOMBINGS DIRECTED AGAINST ETA AND BASQUE SYMPATHIZERS ON FRENCH SIDE OF BORDER AREA WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN PERPETRATED BY SPANISH EXTREME RIGHTISTS FROM "GUERRILLEROS DE CRISTO REY" ORGANIZATION BELIEVED TO HAVE CLOSE TIES TO ELEMENTS SPANISH POLICE. SAME ORGANIZATION IS REPORTEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST OF ATTACKS AGAINST PERSONS AND PROPERTIES OF SUSPECTED BASQUE AND ETA SYMPATHIZERS INSIDE SPANISH BASQUE COUNTRY SINCE GOS DECLARED STATE OF EXCEPTION TWO SPANISH BASQUE PROVINCES APRIL 25.

3. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS, GOF HAS STARTED TO REACT TO THIS TERRORIST ACTIVITY. MINISTER OF INTERIOR PONIATOWSKI REPORTEDLY VISITED THE BAYONNE PREFECTURE MAY 26 TO INVESTIGATE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST REFUGEE BASQUE BY SPANISH RIGHT WIND GROUP OR POLICEMAN. IN JUNE 4 SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PONIATOWSKI, IN REPLY TO QUESTION ABOUT BASQUE SITUATION, SAID THAT "I HAVE ASKED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS THAT GOS PROHIBIT ITS AGENTS FROM COMING ON FRENCH TERRITORY". MINISTER THEN SAID THAT HE HAD ISSUED ORDERS FOR STRICTEST VIGILANCE ON FRANCO-SPANISH BORDER AND "EXPLUSION OF BASQUE REFUGEES SENTENCED FOR USE OF FALSE DOCUMENTATION OR POSSESSION OF ARMS OR EXPLOSIVES..." HE LAMENTED FACT THAT SOME SPANISH EXILES TOOK REFUGE IN FRANCE TO PREPARE VIOLENT ACTIONS IN SPAIN. MINISTER REPORTEDLY SAID ON FRENCH TV JUNE 13 THAT EXTREMISTS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT TERRORIST ACTS IN BASQUE PROVINCES.

4. ACCORDING CONSUL BILBAO, CALL FOR "DAY OF STRUGGLE", INCLUDING A GENERAL STRIKE, FOR JUNE 11, WAS RELATIVE FAILURE WITH ONLY SOME ESTIMATED 10-15,000 WORKERS HEEDING STRIKE CALL, PRINCIPALLY IN GUIPUZCOA PROVINCE. TENSIONS ARE STILL HIGH, HOWEVER, OWING TO CONTINUING POLICE CONTROLS UNDER STATE OF EXCEPTION AND FEELING ABOUT IMPENDING COURT MARTIAL OF TWO BASQUES ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DEATH OF CIVIL GUARD IN 1974.

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5. ON POLITICAL FRONT, CIVIL GOVERNOR OF GUIPUZCOA PROVINCE STATED PUBLICLY JUNE 5 THAT GOVT WAS CONSIDERING REVOCATION OF 1937 DECREE WHICH LIFTED SPECIAL ECONOMIC PRIVILEGES FROM GUIPUZCOA AND VIZCAYA PROVINCES, PRIVILEGES WHICH ARE STILL ENJOYED IN OTHER BASQUE PROVINCES. ARIAS DISCUSSED BASQUE ISSUE JUNE 3 WITH PROMINENT BASQUE DEPUTY AND PROPONENT OF LOCAL AUTONOMY, ESCUDERO RUEDA. IN SEPARATE ACTION, 40 WELL-KNOWN POLITICAL FIGURES, MANY

ASSOCIATED WITH ONE EMBRYO POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, HAVE
PETITIONED ARIAS TO PERMIT FLYING OF BASQUE FLAG.

6. COMMENT : INCREASING BOMBINGS AND OTHER VIOLENT
ACTIONS IN FRENCH BASQUE COUNTRY, ARE WIDELY BELIEVED TO
REPRESENT EFFORT BY "GUERRILLEROS DE CRISTO REY" AND
OTHER RIGHTIST EXTREMISTS, WITH CONNIVANCE OR
AT LEAST ENCOURAGEMENT OF SPANISH AUTHORITIES, TO TAKE
THEIR COUNTER-TERROR CAMPAIGN AGAINST ETA INTO LATTER'S
HERETOFORE SECURE FRENCH SANCTUARIES. GOF HAS APPARENTLY
REACTED JUDGING BY PONIATOWSKI STATEMENTS AND SIGNS OF
INCREASED FRENCH POLICE ACTIVITY ALONG BORDER. BASQUE
PROBLEM IS MOST SERIOUS IRRITANT IN FRANCO-SPANISH
RELATIONS.

7. PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR'S STATEMENT FAVORING RETURN OF
ECONOMIC PRIVILEGES TO TWO BASQUE PROVINCES IS ONE OF
SEVERAL RECENT SIGNS THAT GOVT BEGINNING TO VIEW BASQUE
UNREST AS POLITICAL PROBLEM AS WELL AS PUBLICORDER
PROBLEM. SOMEWHAT MORE CONCILIATORY APPROACH
TO REGIONALIST FEELINGS BECAME APPARENT IN MAY WITH GOVT'S
DECISION TO ALLOW INSTRUCTION IN BASQUE,CATALAN AND
GALICIAN LANGUAGES IN THOSE REGIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, PROVINCE, POLITICAL SITUATION, TERRORISTS, CIVIL DISORDERS, BASQUES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MADRID04176
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750210-1320
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750643/aaaabnaq.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MADRID 3894
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <15 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BASQUE VIOLENCE SPILLS INTO FRANCE
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PFOR, SP, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006